

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 CCO-00 INRE-00 IO-14 ACDA-19 NIC-01 OMB-01

SAJ-01 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 DRC-01 /114 W

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Z 200405Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 940

S E C R E T SAIGON 863

DEPT PLEASE PASS AS NECESSARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, PFOR, VS, CH, PF

SUBJECT: PRC-GVN CLASH IN PARACELS

REF: SAIGON 0862

1. SINCE DICTATING REFTTEL, WE HAVE JUST BEEN INFORMED THAT PRC AIRCRAFT ARE BOMBING AND PRC NAVAL VESSALS ARE SHELLING MONEY, ROBERT AND PATTLE ISLANDS. PRC ARE LANDING TROOPS ON PATTLE ISLAND. VNN HEADQUARTERS REPORTS 10 WIA ON PATTLE ISLAND. HQ 4 AND HQ 5 CLOSED DANANG AT 200730 (H) AND HQ 16 CLOSED DANANG AT 200930 (H). CASUALTIES ON ALL THREE SHIPS ARE 10 KILLED AND 36 WOUNDED. VIETNAMESE NAVY HEADQUARTERS HAS ORDERED THE FOUR COASTAL VESSELS IN THE AREA TO WITHDRAW. VIETNAMESE SHIPS ARE DOING SO, FOLLOWED BY PRC MIG AIRCRAFT. GVN HAS NO PLANS TO REINFORCE OR TO EXTRACT THE VIETNAMESE TROOPS LEFT ON ISLANDS. SHIPS HAVE LOST COMMUNICATIONS WITH TROOPS ON THE ISLANDS.

2. OBVIOUSLY THE PRC IS NOT ENGAGED IN SIMPLE REINFORCEMENT OF IT FORCES IN THE PARACELS BUT IN A WELL PLANNED OPERATION TO SEIZE THE ISLANDS. IN VIEW OF THIS WASHINGTON MAY WISH TO RECONSIDER WHAT KIND OF REPRESENTATIONS IT MAKES TO PEKING AND WHAT

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TONE IT WILL ADOPT IN PUBLIC STATEMENT.

3. WE STILL BELIEVE THAT US MILITARY FORCE NOT (RPT NOT)
REMOTELY DESIRABLE IN THIS SITUATION BUT PERHAPS WE SHOULD
CONSIDER WHAT OTHER STEPS MIGHT BE TAKEN IN THE DIPLOMATIC
ARENA.

4. WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO ALL POSSIBLE TO GET THE GVN TO PLAY IT
AS COOL AS CIRCUMSTANCES WILL PERMIT, CONSIDERING THAT
THEIR FORCES ARE BEING KILLED IN THE ISLANDS.
MARTIN

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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Disposition Reason:
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30 JUN 2005

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